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MEDIA RELEASE

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VICE MAYOR PRO TEM DIANE SMOCK WILL ATTEND NATIONAL FORUM ON EARLY CHILDHOOD SUCCESS

Washington D.C. ---- Vice Mayor Pro Tem Diane Smock of the City of Greenville will attend the National League of Cities (NLC) "Plans for the Future: City Forum on Early Childhood Success" to participate in discussions on how to ensure young children get off to a strong start in life. The forum, being held June 12-13 in Washington D.C., will examine how cities throughout the nation are meeting early childhood needs in areas such as early learning, health care, and parent education and support. More than 35 cities will be represented at the meeting.

The forum is part of a larger national initiative, the City Challenge for Early Childhood Success, launched this year by the President of the NLC, New Haven Mayor John DeStefano. Through the City Challenge, cities have been committing to assess their early childhood needs and develop multi-year plans to provide needed services. NLC's Institute for Youth, Education, and Families will support participating cities' efforts by providing training, technical assistance, and other tools and materials.

"I think we all understand that what happens to children during the first five years of life matters enormously – to the children themselves, their families, our schools, our local economies, and our society as a whole," said Mayor DeStefano, who will open the forum. "We certainly understand the painful consequences of not doing enough to protect and prepare our children throughout their early years. Participants in this City Forum have committed to doing something that will make a real difference for the youngest children in their cities, and the YEF Institute has committed to helping them succeed."

Smock, who is an at-large member of City Council and the City liaison to the Greenville County School Board, notes that the City Forum presents an excellent opportunity to study the issue of early childhood success from a national perspective. "I hope to return from the conference with additional tools and practices that will help us better serve our youngest citizens and in turn help

ensure a better future for them, for their families, and for our community," she says.

Participants in the City Forum on Early Childhood have been drawn from cities, which have effective early childhood agendas in place, as well as those seeking help in developing or refining local plans. Sessions will include municipal officials with experience in early childhood planning and programming and how they developed and implemented strategic plans for their communities, participants who will discuss strategies for supporting parents, promoting health and safety, and improving early childcare and education, and strategies for recruiting the necessary community partners and how to overcome "turf" issues, gain public support and increase community participation, as well as managing and funding early childhood initiatives that are created.

The National League of Cities is the largest national organization for American cities. NLC serves as a resource and advocate for 18,000 cities, towns and villages of all sizes, from New York City to Bee Cave, Texas, which collectively serve 225 million people. Visit www.nlc.org.

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